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ABSTRACT

A working group of professionals and practitioners from across England was formed to identify the basic skills needs of and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to determine how to better meet those needs. The working group sent out a "call for evidence" and used its own networks to gather evidence. The evidence was in the context of the government's agenda on social inclusion and partnership and the emerging national strategy for tackling adult basic skills. The following actions were deemed necessary by the working group: secure an entitlement for of adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; ensure that the appropriate equipment, teaching materials, and accommodation are available; develop and extend the basic skills curriculum to meet the needs of adults who communicate in nonstandard ways; and ensure that all adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are aware of provision and able to access it. The working group formulated and endorsed 10 key recommendations of the strategy outlined in the 1999 report "A Fresh Start" and proposed its own key recommendations. Lists of the working group members and contributors to the study are appended, along with the key findings of the report "A Fresh Start" and a proposed strategy for a basic skills curriculum framework. (MN)

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Freedom to Learn: Basic Skills for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

The Report of the Working Group Looking Into the Basic Skills Needs of Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

May 2000

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Introduction

1 This report sets out ways in which access to good basic skills teaching and learning could be improved for adults with learning difficulties and /or disabilities.

In the foreword to *A Fresh Start*, the report of the committee led by Sir Claus Moser on improving the literacy and numeracy of adults, Sir Claus acknowledged the need for further work on the needs of learners with special learning needs. *"We have not been able to consider the special needs of adults with learning disabilities who wish or need to improve their basic skills. We are conscious of the important concerns at issue. In particular, there is the need to ensure that sufferers from dyslexia are helped with targeted basic skills programmes, where needed. This calls for a special study, following this report, to assess where its recommendations are appropriate and where they should be supplemented."* The conclusions and recommendations that follow are a response to this call.

2 Methodology

- The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) established a working group of professionals and practitioners in the field of basic skills and adults with learning difficulties and /or disabilities (see Annex 1)
- The working group sent out a national 'call for evidence' to provide the opportunity for everyone with an interest in basic skills and learning difficulties and/or disabilities to contribute information
- Working group members used their own national and regional networks to gather evidence and where possible to canvass the views of adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (see Annex 2)
- All the evidence submitted was sifted to identify the common themes reported in section one of the report
- 10 key recommendations were identified and agreed by the working group. Specific evidence and advice relating to disability are covered in section 2 of the report and lead to further detailed recommendations
- Account was taken of the government's agenda on social inclusion and partnership and the emerging national strategy for tackling adult basic skills.
- Some people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be speakers of English as a second language. The recommendations of the ESOL working group should also be taken into account for these learners.

3 The conclusions of the working group

The Learning Difficulties and Disabilities working group endorses the 10 key recommendations of the strategy outlined in *A Fresh Start*. We believe that attention to these will also improve the opportunities for this group of learners. In addition, to meet the

particular needs of adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who wish or need to improve their basic skills, attention must be given to:

- Securing an entitlement for these learners
- Ensuring that all teachers of basic skills understand and recognise that they must meet the particular needs of learners with disabilities or learning difficulties
- Ensuring that appropriate equipment, teaching materials and accommodation are available to meet learners' needs
- Developing and extending the basic skills curriculum to meet the needs of those adults who communicate in non standard ways and for whom the proposed standards are too high
- Developing a curriculum flexible enough to encourage and enable all students with different learning styles to meet the standards
- Ensuring that adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are aware of provision and able to access it.

4 ***The group recommends that:***

i) the basic skills strategy includes all learners

ii) alternative ways of enabling learners to demonstrate achievement be developed

iii) a flexible and coherent curriculum at pre-entry level be developed to enable learners at this level to progress towards the entry-level curriculum and increase flexibility at all other levels

iv) guidance and models of good practice in key aspects of teaching, assessment and learning are developed and disseminated

v) investment is made in general awareness and specialist training for teachers, support workers and others, in teaching skills to learners with disabilities and learning difficulties

vi) funding is made available to improve materials and equipment for teaching and learning including Information and Learning Technology

vii) funding methodologies are devised to support life-long learning and the maintenance of basic skills in ways which promote equality of opportunity

viii) all relevant promotional materials clearly identify the learning opportunities available to those with disabilities or learning difficulties

ix) support is provided to increase opportunities for learning within the community through statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations and partnerships. Different agencies should work together so that learning is better co-ordinated

x) quality assurance arrangements should take these recommendations into account.

Section 1

People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the acquisition of basic skills

This section reports on findings, which submissions showed are shared by disabled learners.

The Learners

5 The government White Paper *Learning to Succeed*, 1999 shows that people with disabilities are more than twice as likely as their peers without disabilities to be unqualified or unemployed. Many learners told us that as the result of underachievement or the need to re-learn skills, they lacked self-confidence and self-esteem and that this was a major barrier to learning. Some adults find that due to onset of illness or accident their basic skills have deteriorated. People with acquired brain injury, for example, may need to relearn skills using a number of new strategies. People with mental health difficulties may find that they are unable to learn in environments and at speeds which they were previously comfortable with. Others need to work hard to maintain the skills they have already learnt.

6 Learners with disabilities need to learn basic skills at all levels. Learners of basic skills with learning difficulties and disabilities which affect learning, range from people who need to acquire the basic skills to enable them to lead more independent lives to those who need to improve their literacy or numeracy to gain employment or enter further education. Some people with disabilities will be able to access the basic skills curriculum and progress through the basic skills standards as long as they have the support they need.

7 As with other learners, people with disabilities may wish to improve their basic skills for a number of reasons. Learners told us that they wanted to learn in order to: help their own children at school; be able to read the Bible; be able to read what was available in the shops; read the instructions at work; be able to recognise the tool bar on the computer; recognise the coins they needed for the laundrette. For others, their motivation to improve basic skills is because they did not learn these skills during their time at school. Some adults want to learn with others who are also disabled; some do not.

8 The remit of this group was to look at the basic skills as defined in *A Fresh Start*. However, for some learners, literacy and numeracy are just two of the many areas which are important to them. Teachers and learners made it clear that in their view the learning of skills such as self-advocacy, independent travel and working alongside others are just as important. Indeed they may be more important for some people. A number of students with learning difficulties need to develop essential pre-requisite skills such as spatial awareness, concentration and hand-eye co-ordination to enable them to progress to the basic skills curriculum.

The Barriers

9 The barriers to learning identified in *A Fresh Start* also affect learners with disabilities. However, because their learning needs are often more complex, the impact of these may be greater. As the national strategy on adult basic skills is developed and implemented, the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be taken into consideration. The detailed proposals in Section 2 address specific issues, which have been raised by groups of learners and their teachers.

10 The poor range and quality of provision in some areas means that many disabled adults are still not given the opportunities they need to learn basic skills. The evidence submitted to the group shows widespread disparities in the range and quality of learning opportunities available to adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The current range of opportunities appears to depend on the commitment and initiative of individuals rather than on a clearly defined right of access. This is not satisfactory.

11 Learning difficulties such as those caused by poor short-term memory, poor sequencing skills or language dysfunction require good specialist teaching, which is not available to many learners because of the shortage of skilled and qualified teachers.

12 If they are to participate in classes, many disabled learners require specialist or individual support. This is frequently unavailable. Some learners require specialist equipment, such as tape recorders, touch screens, braillers, voice synthesisers, without which they cannot learn at the appropriate level. Most would benefit from access to information technology where the software is appropriate. Many teachers are unfamiliar with the range of software available. Other learners require transport to the place of learning, more accessible accommodation, timetabling which avoids fatigue, or a personal assistant.

13 The proposed standards are not sufficiently accessible and the curriculum is insufficiently flexible to enable all learners to build skills in literacy and numeracy. Learners may include, for example, people who communicate through media other than written text, such as Braille, symbols, British Sign Language or communication technology. For many of these learners, alternative ways to access the basic skills framework, including alternative means of demonstrating achievement, are required.

14 Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia may make some aspects of the proposed curriculum and standards inappropriate for some learners; for example, the emphasis on 'word' level decoding and encoding when many dyslexic learners use 'text' level skills to compensate for poor word recognition or phonological skills.

15 A major barrier for many learners including those with severe learning difficulties is that their performance is well below the entry level for the standards. Their learning difficulties may be complex and the acquisition of basic skills very difficult for them. They may not speak or recognise written text. They may communicate better through symbols or signing. Some may be at a very early stage of communicating through eye contact. Many of these learners will need to concentrate on developing skills such as sequencing and listening which are essential pre-requisites for progress to basic skills. The experience of one student shows that progress is possible.

> Because John has very few communication skills, we communicate with eyes, blinking up for 'yes' and down for 'no'. John also uses a communication book. He scans his eyes along the book. Recently we have introduced him to a magnetic board. In the four corners of the board are magnetic numbers and letters. This has proved to be very effective. John thoroughly enjoys the lessons. Last week he was spelling words with four letters.

16 Many teachers made it clear in the submissions that they are unsure of the detailed steps needed to help these learners develop their skills in a structured way, so that they can progress towards entry level work. The work of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) Inspectorate and the Tomlinson Committee confirms this. Teachers consider that improved guidance on the appropriate curriculum pathways for these learners would improve teaching and raise levels of achievement.

> 'A framework, a set of basic skills standards and the steps to take students through would be invaluable when teaching students with more severe learning difficulties.'

17 Many learners are not in formal education. They are taught basic skills in community environments. The contributions of workers from other sectors such as the social services or voluntary organisations are frequently not recognised. Basic skills is often a component of the work that they are doing with their clients whilst teaching independent travel or cookery, for example. *A Fresh Start* has highlighted the need for more practical approaches to learning in the community both to build transferable skills and to make learning more relevant and attractive. We are keen that the contribution others can make to the acquisition of basic skills is recognised and that they are included in the initiative to improve basic skills.

18 This is particularly important for learners who are seeking to improve their level of basic skills to increase their independence. Some learners find it difficult to transfer learning from the theoretical to the practical. Theoretical understanding of literacy and numeracy on its own may not help them achieve the greater independence they hoped for in the way in which they live their lives. Such learners need to learn skills in an appropriate context.

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Mary wanted to learn about money so that she could get herself drinks, tickets, etc. through a slot machine. This was identified as a goal, which would help her be more independent. At the basic skills class she learnt to tell how much each coin was worth, but not to identify which coin she should use in the slot.

19 Many learners find their skills deteriorate unless they are constantly reinforced. They need the opportunity for continuous learning opportunities, in a number of settings within the community, as they continue with their lives. Submissions showed that the links between formal and informal education, involving social service and health service professionals, parents and carers, are frequently weak. Poor co-ordination between agencies results in lower achievement and wasted use of resources. A social worker explained the effect of this in the following example:

David lives at home with his parents. On two days a week he attends a social services day centre and on one afternoon he attends the local college where he is learning basic skills. It was only by accident that we found out that we were all three teaching him different ways of working out the change to expect from money he was giving to a shop assistant. Once we had agreed the best way, he quickly picked up the skill required.

This is an unsatisfactory use of current resources.

20 People who teach basic skills outside the educational context told us that they are not clear about what is required to enable these learners to start on the pathway which leads to the national standards. However, they want to contribute. A clear, detailed curriculum would enable some learners to begin to learn basic skills and others to continue to maintain and develop them in their communities in a more structured way. Where appropriate, co-ordination of learning and personal development plans would enable learners to raise their levels of achievement. A more coherent approach should also result in better use of resources. A proposed structure for a curriculum framework in basic skills for students with learning difficulties is given in Annex 4.

21 We are very concerned at the lack of expertise nationally in teaching basic skills to adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. There has been little research of practical help to teachers and others in identifying effective teaching and learning strategies. There are too few opportunities for improving teaching practice through good training, either for teachers who require general awareness training or for those who need specialist training to enable them to work with particular groups of learners.

Priorities for Improvement

22 The challenge for the twenty-first century is to ensure that all learners with learning difficulties and disabilities can gain access to appropriate learning opportunities in basic skills. There is now an entitlement to life long learning, which will enable learners to acquire new

skills and maintain those already learned. Providers of basic skills education should be responsible for ensuring that learners with difficulties and/or disabilities receive opportunities comparable to other learners.

23 It is important to raise the expectations of learners, their parents and carers, and the people they meet in voluntary and statutory organisations. A disturbing number of respondents to the working group reported that many people still regard all people with learning difficulties as unable to learn and retain basic skills. Many learners have low expectations of themselves and lack confidence because of their poor previous experiences. The Government should ensure that those responsible for publicity and recruitment initiatives relating to adult basic skills take advice from organisations which understand how to promote education positively to this group of learners.

24 We were frequently told by respondents that the current publicity materials for basic skills classes did not make it clear what could be provided for people with a range of disabilities. Would a person who communicated primarily through BSL be able to learn in the class being advertised? Were people with dyspraxia catered for? Better information, which is accessible and more designed, would enable people to decide if the class was suitable and would meet their needs.

25 Closer attention should be paid to the accommodation and access requirements of learners with disabilities and health problems. There should be a steady investment in providing suitable learning venues throughout the communities in which people live. The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (Skill) has information leaflets on appropriate standards, which could be developed into a code of good practice. This would give providers a benchmark against which to measure and improve their accommodation.

26 Co-operation between agencies can make a real difference to the achievements of the learner. At present there is not enough co-operation. To meet the needs of some of these learners the Local Learning Partnerships should include other organisations such as health and social services and community and voluntary agencies. Many of these organisations already play a significant role in encouraging learning in basic skills. They can contribute to setting and achieving the local targets for this work.

27 Accessible common standards will benefit the majority of learners and ensure that most are included. However, there will be a small minority who are unable to achieve or demonstrate competence in one or more aspects of the standards because of their cognitive, sensory or physical impairment. For these students, flexible pathways or alternative ways of demonstrating competence will enable them to continue to make progress.

28 The key to achievement is good teaching. The FEFC Inspectorate reports show that standards of teaching in colleges are generally lower for learners with disabilities and/or difficulties despite the fact that the teachers often show a high level of commitment and enthusiasm. Teaching by other agencies, such as the social services, is not routinely inspected by Ofsted or the FEFC inspectorate. Teachers and other professionals want clear quality

standards against which to measure their work. They also want guidance on good practice, through which to improve their work. Inspection against the quality standards which covers all provision, should assist in identifying the good practice. Investment in training for all those involved will ensure that standards are raised.

29 Nevertheless, learners have again reminded us that cognitive and sensory impairment and physical disabilities affect individuals differently. Some learners have more than one form of learning difficulty and/or disability. Inspection evidence for colleges shows that it is attention to the specific learning needs and goals of individuals, which improves achievements.

30 All learners should have individual learning plans, and wherever possible, learners should be involved in agreeing them. Their views and expectations should be respected, because they are often the best judge of the strategies and the equipment which will be useful in their learning. Their learning plans should be drawn up in a way that enables a range of other people to contribute to their learning. Teachers and others need more guidance on good practice in drawing up, and working within, individual learning plans.

Charmaine is a deafblind student who uses hand-on-hand signing, large print on the CCTV and Braille as methods of communication to enable her to learn. At her review meeting Charmaine discussed and agreed targets for communication and numeracy, which were shared with all her teachers. These targets are worked towards in all the subjects she is studying in college, including Braille, IT, BSL Stage 2 and Exploring Work. Her teacher at the aromatherapy class she attends in the nearby adult education centre is also aware of these targets. Everyone who works with Charmaine knows these targets and ensures that her learning is reinforced. Her reviews show that she is making good progress.

31 *A Fresh Start* rightly identified the importance of assessment. Initial assessment enables teachers and other professionals to identify the starting point for the learner. Diagnostic assessment can be used to identify learning needs and to decide the best teaching and learning strategies for the individual. Both the identification of needs and the use of appropriate teaching methods are crucial if the teaching of basic skills is to be effective. The learning needs of some learners are very complex. Teachers and other professionals want assessment tools in which they can be confident, which provide sufficient information to enable them to draw up a teaching programme to meet the learning needs of the individual and to identify the resources required to ensure that the learning is successful. They consider the current range of assessment tools to be inadequate for this purpose and see the development of these as a priority.

32 Good quality resources for teaching and learning in a range of media will increase access at all levels. The need for learning materials, which are relevant to adults, has already been identified in *A Fresh Start*. Many learners with learning difficulties and disabilities which affect learning will need materials to be produced in a range of media such as CD-ROM, audio and visual cassettes, interactive websites and Braille. They will also need equipment to enable them to access and use these materials. Others are dependent on technology to enable them to

overcome difficulties with learning. Investment is needed for the development of appropriate software, and learning materials, and the training of all staff in the use of these resources.

Elaine is a woman with severe dyslexia who left school early with no qualifications. She found reading difficult and was barely able to write. She had been taught traditionally through phonics, without success. She joined a small group for dyslexic students at her local college where she was taught to use voice recognition technology by a tutor skilled in handling this technology with dyslexic students. Using this technology the barrier to writing was removed. Feedback from the software led to improvement in spelling, punctuation and reading. She has now completed a BSc in computer technology.

33 Learners value awards highly but it is important that any accreditation of attainment in basic skills should be credible and useful. The national report of the FEFC Inspectorate *National Awards for Students with Learning Difficulties* has identified a number of shortcomings in the current system. The review proposed in *A Fresh Start* should take into account the issues raised in this report and in particular the need for guidance on what does and does not need to be accredited in the pre-entry curriculum. Better use should be made of accreditation of prior learning (APL) which submissions have shown us is still underused and which would enable some students to focus more quickly on new learning.

34 In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning of basic skills for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a major priority should be improved training for teachers and support workers. Such training must encompass the specialists and the basic skills teachers who need to be familiar with good practice in order to ensure that the needs of all learners in their classes can be met. Teachers need models of good practice and guidance on the ways in which they can make use of these models.

Section 2

Specific issues identified by the working group

Learners may share learning characteristics, which make it useful for them to be grouped together for planning and resource purposes. The categories of learners identified in this section of the report are categories established to reflect common concerns relating to the acquisition of basic skills. The intention is to help identify the specific issues relating to particular groups of learners.

The same set of broad questions was applied to each category of learners:

- what features affect barriers to participation
- what are the main barriers to participation
- how could current provision be improved
- what improvements would teachers like to see
- what improvements would learners like to see
- what would be an ideal set of arrangements?

Findings and recommendations in relation to these follow.

Access to basic skills for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

35 **There are 8 million people in the UK with some form of hearing loss.** Deafness at birth or in childhood has significant effects on the learning of basic skills and this affects 180,000 people in the UK. A further 500,000 people become severely or profoundly deaf later in life. For them, deafness does not in itself create a need for basic skills, but those who wish to acquire basic skills might find it difficult to access appropriate provision. There are two important subgroups of deaf learners: those who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their preferred language and those who use speech and lipreading. Although the best medium of instruction is different for each group, the required strategies for teaching and learning are similar. The last survey of deaf school leavers was in 1979. It found that the average reading age for all deaf learners was 8.6. This situation has not improved.

36 **The main barrier for deaf people** who have BSL as a first language is that their school education was often not conducted in that language. When adult deaf BSL users attend local classes in basic skills they may not find tutors who can sign fluently and communication support workers (CSWs), where provided may not have high level interpreting skills. Tutors of basic skills classes may not be aware of the specific difficulty born-deaf students have with writing and grammar. English as the structure of BSL is different from English and in numeracy classes, learning materials are usually inaccessible to deaf learners. Deaf students need visual teaching methods and explanations of new technical terms.

37 **The quality of current provision** is variable. Although much work is of a good standard as evidenced in FEFC inspection reports, some centres are under-resourced. Larger towns tend to offer provision at several levels. There is no standard nationally of what should be the minimum qualification for tutors. Initial assessments vary a great deal in their effectiveness; the BSA tests are inappropriate to this group. Overall, there are too few resources for tutors and deaf students.

38 **The views of learners, trainers and teachers were as follows.** There was strong support for the position that basic skills tutors for groups of deaf students be qualified to a minimum level of stage 3 CACDP BSL (Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People). Respondents wanted basic skills provision at an appropriate level, available within easy travelling distance from home. Deaf respondents were concerned about the prospect of national tests being used by employers, as they felt this could cause further discrimination. There was support for the idea of developing CD ROMs and videos for basic skills learners, but most respondents felt this should be a supplement to, not a replacement for classes. NATED, the National Association for Tertiary Education of Deaf People, thought that a teacher of the deaf qualification was important for tutors of basic skills to adults. At present, there is no training course for tutors of deaf students in further education colleges. The Teacher of the Deaf schools course does not include adults.

39 **What should the ideal basic skills arrangements look like?** Ideally there should be different levels of classes for deaf BSL users in basic English and numeracy. The classes would be within travelling distance, and would be advertised on a basic skills website. In basic skills classes where there are deaf students, the tutors would have a minimum of Stage 3 or VQ 3 BSL CACDP skills, teacher training and knowledge of both English and BSL. Students living in rural areas would be able to use video conferencing from a local venue, such as a library, to join these classes. CD ROMs would provide supplementary study courses taught in BSL.

40 **For deaf and hard of hearing students who do not use BSL**, access to local basic skills provision would be improved by the provision of more qualified CSWs. There should be more training for tutors in the literacy and numeracy needs and learning styles of deaf learners. Tutors of all basic skills classes should receive training about the learning needs of deaf students as part of their graduate-level initial training course.

41 **Employers could be encouraged to allow deaf employees paid time off work** to study for basic skills qualifications.

42 **The literacy and numeracy tests should be available in accessible formats** including BSL on CD-ROM.

At one FE college, there are classes at 3 levels in literacy and numeracy. The classes are taught in BSL by tutors who have CACDP BSL stage 3. The tutors also have degrees in the subjects they are teaching and several have further experience of ESOL teaching methods. The materials are specially written for deaf learners and use the resources of the deaf community for assignment work. For example, students can chair meetings in their local deaf club to gain evidence for Wordpower stage 1 & 2. Students use video to record their communication work and members of the numeracy class uses a CD ROM maths dictionary in BSL.

Recommendations specific to this group

- There should be classes at the appropriate level where deaf people can learn basic skills within each Learning and Skills Council area. Classes taught in BSL should be available at levels 1, 2 and 3. Deaf students who use speech and lipreading should be encouraged to attend local classes, and high quality assessment and communication support should be available. Information about provision suitable for deaf learners should be advertised on an accessible website and publicised to careers officers, DEAs, social workers and deaf centres.
- Tutors of classes in which there are deaf learners who use BSL should aim to have a minimum level of competence in BSL, for example, stage 3 CACDP BSL or the equivalent.
- The government should sponsor the development of a higher education level training course for deaf and hearing tutors in the form of an additional module to the new basic skills teaching qualification. Tutors should be able to study by distance learning and the curriculum should include training in working with deaf people who use speech and lipreading as well as those who use BSL.
- The government should invest money in developing a basic maths course and a basic English course taught through the medium of BSL: teaching and learning activities relating to a deaf focused curriculum based on national standards.
- To meet their particular needs, deaf learners in basic skills classes should have access to IT in the form of email, video cameras, CD ROM and a wide selection of appropriate reading books to support their learning.
- The national literacy and numeracy tests should have a BSL version. Given the concern that testing may particularly disadvantage deaf people, the impact of the tests on the employment prospects for deaf candidates should be closely monitored.
- The government should invest money in a good practice guide for basic skills tutors to explain the effects of deafness, and to advise on the teaching strategies to be used with deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

Access to basic skills for people who are blind or visually impaired

43 **There are approximately 1,670,000 people in the UK with a visual impairment.** There are three important sub groups of learners: those with early onset of a visual impairment where initial learning will involve alternative literacy forms; literate adults who have lost sight and need to learn alternative formats; and those with additional disabilities, such as learning difficulties and/or hearing impairment. The implications for basic skills will be different for each learner and reflect their individual circumstances. Communication skills involve both familiarity with alternative formats and, increasingly, use of technology to access those formats.

44 **The main barriers for visually impaired people** include inadequate access to information about what is available and inadequate physical access. In some areas of the country, specialist provision and support are poor or not available. This is especially problematic in relation to deaf/blindness. In some areas there is inadequate or inappropriate assessment of needs, lack of adequate follow up and/or poor access to technology.

45 **The quality of current provision.** Inspections show that there is much good provision in colleges of further education but that a number of colleges fail to address the needs of visually impaired people. The situation in community education is less clear. Surveys indicate that there are some colleges and other teaching bases in which the physical environment is not adapted to make it safe and helpful for the visually impaired. Sometimes there is a lack of appropriately trained and qualified teaching and support staff who can recognise the implications of visual impairment, and the complexity of its impact for basic skills. There is also a lack of information in appropriate formats about what is available, inadequate provision of access technology, and an acute shortage of opportunities to learn tactile methods of reading and writing, such as Braille and Moon.

Focus groups organised by RNIB have provided evidence of what it is that learners think is helpful:

- accredited training of specialist support staff
- appropriate initial assessment
- arrangements with social services or other support services to provide mobility training
- advance notice of reading lists, etc. to allow for timely production of alternative format material
- notes and handouts in accessible formats
- introduction of appropriate access technology
- additional support for work experience
- specialist careers guidance in planning progression

46 **The views of learners, trainers and teachers.** Feedback from focus groups of learners indicates the wish to be included and actively involved in the planning and assessment process. Learners thought that more materials and support was needed and that arrangements for attending classes should be more flexible. Teaching and support staff believed that there ought to be a greater general awareness of the implications of disability, but they also thought they needed to raise their own levels of specific knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to respond more effectively to the needs of visually impaired students. Teachers and

support staff also wanted better access to specialist support and more specially adapted teaching materials.

47 **What should the ideal basic skills arrangements look like?** Ideally there should be a specialist contact person in each learning centre or learning partnership responsible for learners with visual impairments who has information available in accessible formats to distribute to potential students, their parents and carers. Smaller centres in the community should link to larger partners such as colleges to form a learning partnership. There should be better links to mainstream provision which facilitate basic skills support within the wider mainstream curriculum, and an assessment process that accurately identifies learning and support needs. Students should have individual learning programmes which specify appropriate options for progression. Access technology should be available to meet individual needs. Learners also need better access to specialist support staff, including mobility trainers and IT trainers.

Recommendations specific to this group.

- Accredited training in disability issues should be introduced.
- There should be further specialist, accredited training for teaching and support staff working with visually impaired students, supported by organisations concerned with this client group.
- As part of their initial training, teachers should learn some of the basic communication techniques required to work effectively with deaf/blind people.
- Further development of information and resources is required so that these are available in a variety of formats.
- Library support services need to be co-ordinated more effectively.
- Information technology training for the teachers and technical staff involved in continuing education should include information about, and instruction in the use of, the main types of specialist hardware and software that learners require for access.
- There should be an initiative to re-establish *Moon* as a tactile method of reading and writing. *Moon* is much simpler than braille and therefore particularly appropriate for visually impaired people with learning difficulties.

Access to basic skills for people with mental health difficulties

48 **About one in five people will have mental health difficulties** at some stage in their lives. People at all levels of educational ability are affected. Those with mental health difficulties may need flexible forms of provision which reflects the episodic nature if mental ill health. Learners may need to take breaks from learning during periods of ill health, which will affect the continuity of learning and the degree to which material is retained. Medication may interfere with learning and memory function. Some people may have a history of institutionalisation which makes it a struggle for them to deal with everyday tasks; for example, using money, where others have previously looked after their finances. Confidence

and communication skills are often adversely affected. Some people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may have additional mental health difficulties.

49 **The main additional barrier for people with mental health difficulties** is the widespread ignorance and prejudice about mental health. This can present an attitudinal barrier to people improving their basic skills. Training for all tutors should include an awareness-raising element on mental health difficulties. The side effects of medication may interfere with cognitive processes and create a further barrier to learning.

50 **The views of learners, trainers and teachers were as follows.**
Learners would like opportunities to regain lost skills and thereby to increase their confidence and self esteem. They wish to be regarded as students to escape the label of 'patient' or 'client' and to be encouraged to learn in a welcoming environment. Tutors would like more training in mental health awareness and felt that service users should be involved in its delivery. They believe that it is necessary to acknowledge learners small steps of progress and to recognise the importance of social skills, confidence and relationships when measuring achievement. More guidance, outreach and effective learner support was also needed.

51 **What should the ideal basic skills arrangements look like?**
Ideally, basic skills provision would be developed to include an inter-agency framework in which health, social services and voluntary organisations work with adult and further education providers to plan and review provision. There should be well-established outreach provision in day centres and hospitals, which would link into adult and further education. This should enhance the availability of support and would enable, for example, courses in communication and self-expression to be linked to basic skills as a means of helping individuals to progress and gain self-confidence. Provision must be flexible so that learners can take breaks from learning when unwell, then have fresh opportunities to start again. Recognition of learning should include accreditation of achievement as part of an appropriate progression route. Mental health awareness training should be an integral part of training for all basic skills tutors.

Dearne Valley College has a very successful creative writing course for people with mental health difficulties. Lancashire's 'Stepping Stones' programme involving the LEA and 10 colleges offers a model for agencies working collaboratively. New College in Nottingham has close links with its local health authority and has a well-established programme which includes outreach provision, discrete classes and inclusive provision. Sandwell College and West Nottinghamshire College make extensive provision for people with mental health difficulties, developing a curriculum around their expressed wishes, which includes basic skills.

Some providers offer a range of provision, which includes classes in hospitals, day centres and other community centres. In other cases, the provision offered is not flexible enough to meet the needs of learners with mental health difficulties.

Recommendations specific to this group

- The impact of mental health difficulties should be openly acknowledged.
- Learning opportunities for people with mental health difficulties, including basic skills provision, is under-developed nationally. There should, therefore, be funded pilot projects relating to mental health and basic skills.
- More flexible provision, allowing for periods of illness without penalty to learner or provider, should be developed.
- A multi-agency framework should be established in which partners from different agencies can plan, deliver and evaluate learning programmes. Partnership agreements which facilitate mutual support and exchange of information should be encouraged.
- A training programme should be developed to raise awareness of the needs of learners with mental health difficulties who have basic skills needs. This should be readily available as part of all initiatives to improve teaching standards and raise awareness. It should emphasise the importance to learning of increasing learners self esteem and confidence.
- Support must be available at any transition stage.
- Materials for use in learning basic skills should take account of the particular needs of those with a mental health difficulty.

Access to basic skills for people with dyslexia

52 **Dyslexia affects 10% of the general adult population, and 4% severely.** This figure is far higher amongst those lacking in basic skills, including prison offenders. Learners with dyslexia, however, are found across the whole ability range. They generally have an uneven or 'spiky profile' of abilities. Dyslexia impedes the usual acquisition of reading, spelling and often handwriting skills. It also affects organisational and planning skills. Dyslexic learners continue to experience difficulties with written language whatever level of competence they achieve. Their difficulties with information processing also means that they need to be taught differently. If achievement is to be raised, basic skills need to be contextualised, as dyslexic people, more than others, generally learn more effectively in areas in which they have a high level of interest.

53 **The main additional barrier for learners with dyslexia acquiring basic skills** stems from their previous learning experiences. Many adults with dyslexia feel that they have had humiliating and damaging experiences of school education and many report unsuccessful attempts to acquire basic skills through adult basic education classes. They are reluctant to risk 'more of the same'. Many were not identified as dyslexic at school and were labelled 'thick, stupid or lazy'. Lack of understanding, lack of specialist expertise and suitable classes, complex enrolment procedures, the limited availability of diagnostic assessment, and the lack of funding for specialist teaching, are all barriers to access.

54 **The quality of current provision** is perceived as uneven and inadequate. Access to diagnostic assessment is usually available only to students enrolled on full-time, mainstream FEFC-funded courses. Very few basic skills courses are appropriate for dyslexic learners.

Basic skills tutors and managers lack knowledge about dyslexia. In particular, there is lack of awareness of the role language processing plays in literacy acquisition. There is little workplace awareness of dyslexia or provision for dyslexic employees to improve basic skills. In prisons, screening is now common but assessment and specific tuition less so. Dyslexia affects auditory processing and short-term memory so that dyslexics may be disadvantaged in large groups and by inappropriate teaching methods. Current forms of accreditation in basic skills are generally inappropriate for dyslexic learners and sometimes act as an additional barrier. Recently produced, high-quality learning materials which include voice activated software, reading machines and CD ROM, are not readily available.

55 **The views of learners and teachers**. Learners consider they have often been stigmatised because their specific learning difficulty was not recognised. They believe they would have benefited from more specialist diagnosis and teaching and believe that only classes exclusively for dyslexic adults are worth while. Many dyslexic learners wanted access to other courses or qualifications but saw their basic skills as lacking. Dyslexic learners do not want to follow courses at levels below their intellectual and practical abilities, simply to gain access to the courses they want or need to undertake. Tutors and trainers, including those working in prisons, believe that attempts to develop the skills of individual dyslexic learners are hindered by large classes, lack of time and inadequate facilities.

56 **What should the ideal basic skills arrangement look like?** Ideally dyslexic learners should be taught by tutors with specialist training in diagnosing and teaching adult dyslexic learners. Teaching should be dyslexia-specific and flexible. There should be access to specialist diagnosis, individual and small group tuition as well as opportunities for learning without attending classes, such as through the Internet. There needs to be an explicit policy on admissions, enrolment, assessment and marking for dyslexic students in order to ensure that they have the opportunity to achieve at a level commensurate with their knowledge and abilities.

Wilson is a 25 year old persistent offender who left school with no qualifications and very limited literacy skills. He was referred to the Dyspel project which provides diagnosis and individual tuition to adult dyslexic offenders. He received a full assessment and the results were explained to him in detail enabling him to understand the reasons for his past difficulties and the ways in which he could learn. Motivated by this, he was keen to improve his basic skills and progressed to the point where he was able to put together a flyer advertising his skills as a jobbing gardener. Consequently, he was offered work in a home for the elderly, working as a care assistant. He was able to use his newly acquired strategies to learn the words he needed for patient record keeping, including the names of drugs and dietary requirements. He believes that the opportunity to learn these skills has changed his life.

Recommendations specific to this group.

- There should be improved initial screening to identify learners who could be dyslexic.

- As many dyslexic learners were not identified at school, they need access to fully-funded, specialist diagnostic assessment
- The opportunity for specialist support should be available to all adult dyslexic learners. 'awareness' and 'identification' should be part of the training curriculum for all basic skills tutors
- Provision should be flexible reflecting individual skills and learning profiles and learners should have individual tuition and work in small groups where necessary
- Learners should have access to multi-sensory resources and technology, and photocopying/enlarging facilities
- There should be quiet and private areas for diagnosis and study.
- There should be a curriculum devised using the basic skills standards and tests which allows learners to achieve in a variety of ways
- An explicit dyslexia policy is needed as part of all basic skills strategies.
- Research should be conducted into the numbers of those with basic skills needs who have dyslexia (or other specific learning difficulties), given the strong anecdotal evidence that there are large numbers of undiagnosed dyslexic adults.

Access to basic skills for people with physical disabilities

57 **There are several million adults in England with physical disabilities.** Many students who have physical disabilities do not have a cognitive impairment. These students will be able to access the general basic skills curriculum as long as their support needs are met and they are allowed to study at a pace which is appropriate for them. Some students will also have cognitive impairment or a secondary disability and other sections of this report will also be relevant to them.

58 **The main barriers for people with physical disabilities** are made worse by their complexity. Transport, physical access and accessible information all play a part but there are other significant barriers. In some cases inadequate funding and lack of inter-agency collaboration mean that other barriers, such as lack of motivation, response to previous negative experiences and cognitive ability too low to access basic skills as currently structured, are difficult to overcome. For most people with physical disabilities, the properly paced, resource intensive, specially structured programmes and curriculum are not available.

59 **The quality of current provision** depends largely on arrangements for access and support. Technology which enables people to have access to basic skills teaching wherever they are is underused even when access to classrooms is poor.
Existing good practice centres around an inclusive approach to learning which caters specifically for people with physical disabilities and is relevant to individual needs, status and aspirations. Provision is enhanced when there is a multi-agency framework in place involving education, training, social services, health, employment service and voluntary sector. Other key determinants are access to resources, flexibility in arrangements for teaching and attendance, strategies for building learners, the use of real life situations to enhance teaching, and the celebrating of achievement.

60 **The views of learners, trainers and teachers were as follows.** The key issues for learners centre round the need for choice, consultation, flexible delivery and good access. For trainers and teachers the key issues are access to specific training on disability, effectively sized teaching groups and access to, and use of, the most effective technologies and resources.

61 **The main priorities for improving access to basic skills** for these students will include providing courses at times and venues which suit the student; ensuring the availability of specialist equipment and enabling technology; developing flexible individual programmes which enable the students to study when they feel physically able to do so and to take breaks when they need them.

A student at a residential specialist college who had brittle bone disease, was funded by the FEFC, social services and the health authority, and received additional support from local community services. As a result of his time at the college, he was able to successfully master an acceptable level of basic skills and through the access centre to go on to mainstream education and employment He regards this opportunity as one which enabled him to lead a full and productive life.

Recommendations specific to this group

- Basic skills for this group of learners should be redefined as the ability of an individual to a) communicate both verbally and/or non-verbally b) use numbers as an integral part of communication.
- The government should continue to promote initiatives to increase access.
- Publicity and promotional materials should make it clear that all learners are welcome no matter what their prior level of learning.
- New learning materials need to be researched and developed for learners with multiple disabilities.
- Initiatives to increase home-based learning, including the provision of peripatetic teachers, should be supported.
- The good practice which is promoted should centre around an inclusive approach to learning. This means making programmes of study directly relevant to the individual's needs and priorities, building on a multi-agency framework, creating programmes and curricula which are flexible, providing the necessary access to resources, ensuring that the pace of programmes meets the needs of those with physical disabilities, placing a high priority on the development of practical skills, and teaching basic skills in real life situations.

Access to basic skills for people with learning difficulties

62 **There are 1.2 million adults in the UK with learning difficulties.** Having learning difficulties impacts on the acquisition of basic skills in two different ways. Firstly, the capacity to develop skills is affected by the level of cognitive ability. Secondly, some adults with learning difficulties will have an additional disability, such as sensory or physical impairment, in addition to their cognitive or intellectual impairment. Such additional disabilities may require non-standard means of access to basic skills, including aids to communication, for example, Braille, British Sign Language, Makaton or a voice synthesiser. For some students with profound and complex learning difficulties, reading standard text may be an impossible goal to attain. Their basic skills would include the need to have their own communication styles such as signing or use of symbols, recognised and valued. In addition to literacy and numeracy, the basic skills requirements for people with learning difficulties should include the essential skills for everyday living, learning to learn, communication skills including IT skills, creative skills to promote self expression, and confidence building skills. These basic skills should be viewed against the overall needs of the individual and set in the context of the society in which they live. If the Moser definition of basic skills is interpreted literally, many people with learning difficulties would be excluded from the basic skills curriculum derived from the proposed standards.

63 **The main additional barriers for people with learning difficulties** which were most frequently raised by respondents to the working group are transport, physical access, the need for flexible support, and the complexities of inter-agency funding. The teaching of basic skills is rarely integrated with the rest of people's lives. For example, a person may be taught by conflicting methods, uncoordinated inputs from day, residential and education staff. The lack of integration is compounded by a lack of clear learning outcomes, poor recording mechanisms, and gaps in inter-agency collaboration. Staff often teach new skills with little or no attention to the maintenance of skills already acquired.

64 **Many people with learning difficulties have low expectations** of themselves, often exacerbated by the low expectations of tutors and others. Some people were discouraged from going to college; others were forced to go to classes even when they did not want to. In some current provision, classes are too big and integration into mainstream, non-specialist classes is difficult. The lack of research into the processes of learning for this group is an additional barrier to effective provision.

65 **The quality of current provision** needs to be improved. Provision is unevenly spread geographically and it is not readily available to all the people with learning difficulties who want to learn. It tends to exclude particular groups within the community, such as older adults, those with severe or profound /multiple learning difficulties, and those with an additional disability or mental health need. The level at which entry provision is pitched is too high for some people. The pace of work may be too fast for some, while for others there is a lack of challenge. It is felt that accreditation has been driving the process, and this has led to a lack of curriculum development. There are few materials at the right reading level which are geared to adult interests. Software developers have produced some excellent materials for children but very little for adults that are age-appropriate and sufficiently challenging. Many adult students find the use of learning materials such as plastic money and cardboard clocks

demeaning, degrading and confusing. There need to be more resources which are appropriate, relevant to students' lives and help them to learn.

66 **The views of learners, trainers and teachers were as follows.** Learners wanted more classes, more choice, better access and clearer information. In addition they wanted to be treated as adults, to get certificates, to be taught through IT, to make progress, and for classes to be fun. Staff recognise that basic skills should not be separated from other aspects of peoples' lives. They want to be able to respond to the overall needs of their students and to have the chance to work more closely with other agencies. They want students to achieve and progress, and recognise that to be successful, students must have more individual attention and be given longer to reach their goals.

67 **What should an ideal basic skills arrangement look like?** Provision in the twenty-first century must be designed to meet specific individual needs so that people with all levels of learning difficulty can realise their full potential. The most effective vehicle for improving basic skills is to develop skills in relevant contexts, and this will directly improve the quality of life for people with learning difficulties.

Martin has moderate learning difficulties and lives alone. He attends a basic skills group and has made good progress in reading and writing. Martin wanted to make contact with his brother whom he had not seen for seven years. With the help of the basic skills teacher he was able to write a letter to him. His brother responded and they decided to meet up regularly. With further teaching he has worked out how to read the bus timetable and work out the coach fare. He is now able to travel independently the 100 miles to visit his brother and this has encouraged him to go on learning.

Each student must be involved in deciding, with help as necessary, which skills to develop. Students must also have an individualised learning plan. The plan should build on previous learning experiences and contain information which, with the student's consent, is shared across agencies. It should also include statements on any additional support required, such as additional classroom support and help with transport. Students should learn using communication methods best suited to their needs, such as adaptive technology and signing, and have access to other specialist support such as speech therapy, where necessary. All resources should be up to date and of high quality. Staff development for all tutors should address issues relating to students with learning difficulties, including the development of positive attitudes towards learning difficulties, the acquisition of appropriate teaching skills and the ability to help plan individual programmes. The funding structure should support forms of flexible delivery and allow providers to use imaginative approaches that suit students' learning requirements.

Oaklands College in Hertfordshire won a Beacon award for their effective curriculum for people with profound and multiple disabilities. In London there was a joint training and inter-agency agreement between adult education, health and social services. In Coventry students were taught how to interview and select staff. The development of advocacy and speaking up

courses has been growing slowly with the help of user-led organisations such as CHANGE, run by/for people with learning disabilities.

Recommendations specific to this group

- All those with learning difficulties, regardless of ability, should have the entitlement to a broad basic skills curriculum, which is relevant, meets individual needs and enhances dignity and achievement.
- Basic skills for people with learning difficulties should be set within an inter-agency framework. There should be an entitlement to the services necessary to access basic skills provision, such as the provision of transport and support inside and outside the classroom.
- People with learning difficulties should choose to participate in basic skills, rather than be forced to attend by staff or carers.
- The definition of basic skills used in *A Fresh Start* should be interpreted or expanded to include sign, symbol, gesture and methods of augmented communication.
- Where learning outcomes are below the level of the national standards they should be referenced to individual goals rather than standards.
- More flexible ways of recognising achievement should be developed, including witness statements and learning outcomes records, where formal accreditation is not relevant.
- Individual needs should set the agenda for curriculum development in which group learning is also important. There should be a learning plan owned by each individual and based on a portfolio system.
- Outreach provision should be an integral part of the learning opportunities on offer.
- A staff and curriculum initiative is required, especially for LEAs, voluntary organisations and others who have not had the advantage of the FEFC's basic skills quality initiative.

Annex 1

Members of the Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Group

Chair

Merillie Vaughan Huxley	-	Further Education Funding Council, Inspectorate

Advisors

Martin Howarth	-	DfEE
Matthew Griffiths	-	Further Education Funding Council, Inspectorate
Sarah Burnette	-	Westcountry Training and Consultancy Services

Secretary

Pauline Sharman	-	DfEE

Members

Loraine Adams	-	Employers' Forum on Disability
Gordon Dryden	-	Royal National Institute for the Blind
Sally Faraday	-	FEDA
Melanie Jameson	-	Adult Dyslexia Organisation
Cynthia Klein	-	London Languages & Literacy Unit
John Lawton	-	MENCAP
Liz Maudslay	-	SKILL
Sally Mckeown	-	British Educational Communications & Technology Agency
Phil Morgan	-	DfEE
Judith Norrington	-	Association of Colleges
Rachel O'Neill	-	City College of Manchester
Jim Pateman	-	Basic Skills Agency
Joanne Rule	-	British Dyslexia Association
Donald Schloss	-	Adult Dyslexia Organisation
Louise Stitson	-	DfEE
Jeannie Sutcliffe	-	NIACE
Mike Syrr	-	Portland College
Wendy Wallace	-	NHS Regional Office

Annex 2

List of Contributors including Learner Groups

1 Abingdon FE College
2 Adult College of Barking and Dagenham
3 Adult Dyslexia Organisation
4 Advocacy in Darlington
5 Amersham and Wycombe College
6 Anglia Polytechnic University
7 Askham Bryan College
8 Barnfield College
9 Barnsley College
10 Basic Skills Agency
11 Beverley College
12 Birmingham College of Food
13 Birmingham Institute for Deaf People
14 Bishop Burton College
15 Blackburn College
16 Bolton Action Research Centre for Inclusive Education
17 Bolton College
18 Bolton Community Education Service
19 Bracknell and Wokingham College
20 Brighton College of Technology
21 Bristol and District People First
22 British Deaf Association
23 British Dyslexia Association
24 British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)
25 Brockenhurst College
26 Buckinghamshire County Council
27 Bury College
28 Calderdale People First
29 Canterbury College
30 CHANGE, London
31 Charlton Workshop, Manchester
32 Chesterfield College
33 Chorlton Workshop (Manchester)
34 City and Islington College
35 City College Birmingham
36 City College Manchester
37 City Literary Institute, London
38 City of Bristol College
39 Cleveland College of Art and Design
40 Colchester Institute

41 College of West Anglia
42 Community Service Volunteers
43 CSV
44 Derbyshire Speaking Out Group
45 Derwen College
46 Doncaster College
47 Dudley College of Technology
48 Dunstable College
49 Durham County Council (Leap Adult Basic Education)
50 Dyslexia Institute, The
51 East Devon College
52 East Durham and Houghall Community College
53 East Lancashire Deaf Society
54 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
55 Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology
56 Eccles College
57 ECHO User Group
58 Elfrida Society (The), London
59 Enfield College
60 Essex County Adult Education
61 Essex County Council Adult Education
62 Exeter College
63 Fareham College
64 Further Education Development Agency
65 Gateway College
66 Gillian Sedgwick, West Midlands
67 Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology
68 Grapevine, Coventry
69 Great Yarmouth College
70 Grimsby College
71 Hackney Community College
72 Hadlow College
73 Handsworth College
74 Haringey People First
75 Hendon College
76 Henley College Coventry
77 Herefordshire College of Technology
78 Hereward College
79 Highbury College
80 Home Farm Trust (HFT)
81 Hull College
82 Hulme Adult Education Centre, Manchester
83 Ings Adult Community Education Centre (Kingston upon Hull)
84 Jigsaw Disability Action Training, Lancashire
85 Kendal College

86 Key Learning, Cheltenham
87 Kidderminster College
88 Kingsway College
89 Lackham College
90 Lambeth College
91 Lancaster Adult Dyslexics Group
92 Leeds College of Building
93 Leesons Centre, Orpington
94 Leicester College
95 Lewes Tertiary College
96 Lewisham College
97 Lewisham, Community Education
98 Lincoln People First
99 Linkage College
100 Liverpool Community College
101 London Language and Literacy Unit
102 Manchester Adult Education Service
103 Medway Adult Education, Kent
104 Melton Mowbray College
105 Mid Kent College
106 Middlesborough Council
107 NACRO
108 National Association of Tertiary Education for Deaf people
109 National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
110 NE Lincolnshire Adult Education Service
111 New College Durham
112 New College Nottingham
113 Newcastle College
114 Newham People First
115 NHS and Social Care
116 Norah Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol
117 North East Worcestershire College
118 North Hertfordshire People First (by tape)
119 North Lincolnshire Adult Education Service
120 North Lindsay College
121 Northampton College
122 Northampton College
123 Northamptonshire County Council
124 Northbrook College
125 Norton Radstock College
126 Nottinghamshire Deaf Society
127 Nottinghamshire Dyslexia Association (NDA)
128 Oakmeads Community College, West Sussex
129 Otley College
130 Oxford College of FE

131 Oxford College of Further Education
132 Oxfordshire LEA
133 Park Lane College
134 Pendleton Brook Day Centre, Lancashire
135 People First of Macclesfield
136 Plymouth Grove Centre and Spurley Hey Centre
137 Portland College
138 Prison Education Directorate Basic Skills Conference, attending tutors, (City College, Manchester on 26th January 2000)
139 Rathbone
140 Redbridge Institute of Adult Education
141 Redcar and Cleveland College
142 Regent College
143 Richard Huish College
144 Ridge Danyers College
145 RNIB
146 RNIB
147 Rother Valley College
148 Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
149 Royal Association in Aid of Deaf people
150 Royal Forest of Dean College
151 Royal National Institute of Deaf People
152 Rugby College
153 Runshaw College
154 Salford College
155 Salisbury College
156 Sandwell College
157 Sefton LEA
158 Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology
159 Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
160 Skills for People, Newcastle upon Tyne
161 Somerset College of Arts and Technology
162 Soundwell College
163 South Devon College
164 South Downs College
165 South East Derbyshire College
166 South East Essex College
167 South Gloucestershire College Community Education Service
168 South Northamptonshire Adult Education
169 South Thames College
170 South Thames College (Wandsworth Adult College)
171 Southend Adult Community College
172 Southgate College
173 Southgate College
174 Southhampton City College

175 Speaking Up at Gateshead
176 Speaking Up, Cambridge (by tape)
177 St John Rigby College
178 St Vincent College
179 St. Owen's Centre Student Council
180 Staff and students of NATSPEC Colleges
181 Stanmore College
182 Stephenson College
183 Stockport College of F&HE
184 Stockton on Tees Adult Education Service
185 Stockton-on-Tees LEA
186 Stourcastle Day Centre, Dorset
187 Suffolk College
188 Sussex Deaf Association
189 Swallow
190 Swindon College
191 Tameside College
192 Tameside Soci[illegible]ervices
193 Teeside Tertiary [illegible]llege
194 The College of North East London
195 The College of West Anglia
196 The Community College
197 The Henley College
198 The Leap Adult Education Centre
199 Tile Hill College
200 Torbay Council
201 Tresham Institute of F&HE
202 University of Central Lancashire, Deaf Studies Department
203 University of Edinburgh
204 University of Huddersfield
205 Wakefield College
206 Waltham Forest College
207 West Cumbria College
208 West Nottinghamshire College
209 West Sussex County Council
210 Wilmorton (Derby Tertiary College)
211 Winstanley College
212 Worcestershire ASSIST
213 Yeovil College
214 YMCA
215 York College

Annex 3 - *A Fresh Start* – The National Strategy

A Fresh Start, the report of the committee led by Sir Claus Moser on improving the literacy and numeracy of adults was published in 1999. The national strategy proposed in the report is intended to succeed in attracting potential learners into study schemes and to identify ways in which the quality and standards of curricula and learning opportunities could be improved. It has 9 main elements:

- national targets
- an entitlement to learn
- guidance, assessment and publicity
- better opportunities for learning
- quality
- a new curriculum
- a new system of qualifications
- teacher training and improved inspection
- the benefits of new technology.

Annex 4

Proposed Structure for a Curriculum Framework in Basic Skills for Students with Learning Difficulties

This framework is intended as an example of a possible progression route for learners whose learning goals are vocational courses or employment. It is presented here to illustrate how some elements of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy may be incorporated into a wider framework. It is not intended to be the flexible curriculum framework for basic skills proposed in this report which will lead to the national standards and curriculum for literacy and numeracy.

Before teachers can begin the process of curriculum planning in basic skills it is essential that they recognise that students with learning difficulties are not a homogeneous group. As with any other group of students, individuals have very different needs, aptitudes and interests. They will come from diverse backgrounds, have different lifestyles and be aiming for very different long-term goals. It is therefore impossible to have one level of provision which will meet the needs of all students with learning difficulties. The following 'ladder' illustrates the different levels within the pre-foundation level curriculum and describes progression from entry level to level 1:

Entry level

- this gives students the basic skills they need to enter entry level courses and leads to introductory level
- which gives students the skills they need to enter pre-vocational courses or non-vocational courses at a similar level and leads to pre-vocational level
- which gives students the skills they need to enter vocational courses or non-vocational courses at a similar level and leads to vocational level, level 1/NVQ level 1/GNVQFoundation
- which gives students the basic skills for employability every day living or to progress to higher-level vocational courses

Having established the basic structure of the basic skills curriculum framework, the next task is to analyse the basic skills and competences to be taught at each of the levels. The starting point for this must be a careful analysis of the skills and competences students need to learn if they are to succeed on level 1 or foundation level programmes. Once these have been identified, teachers need to 'work back' through the different levels and ensure that they are teaching students the skills and competences which will enable them to progress successfully through the different levels to level 1 or foundation programmes.

The following section identifies the basic skills that students need to succeed on level 1 and foundation level programmes. It then works back through the different levels of the curriculum ladder, describing the basic skills and competences to be taught at each level.

Vocational level/Level 1 Non-vocational

To succeed on an NVQ level 1 or GNVQ foundation level course, or in employment, students need to be able to:

- behave within accepted norms in the college, community and in the workplace
- follow instructions or take orders, and respond to them within an acceptable timescale
- relate appropriately to a range of people in different roles and environments
- communicate effectively
- present themselves as potential employees and acceptable adults
- respond to the requirements and demands of work and of adult life
- learn to carry out routine tasks without continuous supervision
- accept that they have a lot to learn, and be willing to learn

This means that at pre-vocational or entry 2 and 3 levels the main aims of the programmes will be to teach students:

- to behave within accepted norms in the community and in the workplace
- to follow instructions or take orders, and respond to them
- to relate appropriately to a range of people in different roles and environments
- the skills of speaking and listening
- to wear appropriate clothing and/or protective gear in the workplace
- personal presentation
- to respond to the requirements and demands of adult life
- to carry out routine tasks without continuous supervision.

To succeed on a pre-vocational level or entry level 1 course, a student needs to be able to:

- follow verbal instructions
- relate appropriately to different kinds of people
- behave appropriately in different environments/a simulated workplace
- present themselves as acceptable adults
- travel independently
- respond to some of the requirements and demands of work.

- This means that at introductory or pre-entry level 3 the main aims of the programmes will include:
- successful responses to verbal instructions
- relating appropriately to different kinds of people
- behaving appropriately in different environments
- wearing appropriate clothing and/or protective gear
- effective personal hygiene
- understanding some of the requirements and demands of work.

To succeed on an introductory level course, a student needs to be able to

- understand some spoken or signed communication
- communicate with others in some way
- relate to others, and to respond to the environment

This means that at pre-introductory level or pre-entry levels 1 and 2 the main aims of the programmes will include

- the development of a basic vocabulary of words, sounds or signs
- the development of the use of this vocabulary to communicate with others
- the development of some basic responses to others and to the environment

All students at pre-introductory and pre-entry level are capable of learning, but they will have profound intellectual impairments and will require very specialised teaching.